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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000527

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SUBJECT: FM KUBIS ON KOSOVO, MISSILE DEFENSE, CFE, AND AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary. During a cordial one-hour meeting on September 18, Ambassador Vallee and Foreign Minister Kubis discussed Kosovo, CFE, Missile Defense, and Afghanistan. FM Kubis noted that he had begun to advocate in EU circles the idea of decoupling the results of the Troika process on Kosovo from the issue of an EU ESDP mission. On missile defense, Kubis stressed that the GOS position has not changed, and that the Prime Minister's recent critical comments reflected only his personal views and that of his party. Citing impressions from his recent visit to The Hague, Kubis expressed serious concern about the ability of Allies to sustain long-term commitments in Afghanistan in the face of domestic political pressures. Kubis expressed enthusiasm regarding the U.S. "parallel action" plan on CFE and a willingness to play a leading role, within the Alliance and with Russia, to promote the process. End Summary.

KOSOVO

¶12. (C) Ambassador underscored the U.S. commitment to the Troika process, but urged Slovakia to begin prudent and discreet planning with its EU partners on how to deal with possible outcomes post December 10. Kubis said that there is consensus within the EU on a number of points, including the need to support the Troika and EU Representative Ischinger. At the same time, the EU will make clear to the parties that they will be judged on their performance, not their "EU vocations." Kubis stressed that the EU would not stake out a common position, e.g., on UDI, that could prejudice the outcome, and urged that the U.S. follow a similar line. Kubis emphasized that Slovakia is one of several EU countries that would not recognize UDI. Slovakia views the status quo as untenable, and it does not support an open-ended process of negotiations. Thus, noted Kubis, emphasis must be on the current talks; there is no other option. After the Troika makes its report to the UNSYG in December, the issue should return to the UNSC for deliberation. Ambassador Vallee asked what the ramifications of UDI would be for an ESDP Mission. Kubis replied that he has begun to push the idea of decoupling, prior to the December 10 deadline, the issue of an EU mission from the results of the Troika process. In this way, Kubis explained, the EU could begin to plan for action and "create the reality," on the ground, rather than merely respond to it. In response to further questioning, Kubis indicated that as long as the proper legal foundation exists, there was no

reason to question Slovak participation in KFOR. That said, if major EU partners withdrew because of concerns about the legal underpinnings, Kubis could not predict what Slovakia might do.

MISSILE DEFENSE

13. (C) The Ambassador characterized the September 14 declaration of Central European Social Democratic leaders against missile defense as unhelpful and inaccurate. The statement ignored the ongoing consultations between the U.S. and its NATO Allies and with Russia, as well, and was particularly at odds with Kubis, prior assertions that missile defense was a bilateral affair. If the Slovak position on missile defense has changed, due to the Prime Minister's domestic or regional political calculations (to boost Czech Social Democrat Paroubek's election prospects), the U.S. needs to know. Kubis did not hide his distaste for the statement, but he offered a rather stilted and anemic response. According to the Slovak Constitution, he said, it is the MFA that speaks for the government on such issues. It is to Kubis we should listen on this question. Fico's statements reflect his personal views, and those of his party. Kubis stated unequivocally that there has been no change to the GOS position on MD. This issue has not been before the Coalition Council, which he believes would not support the language of the Social Democrats (Note: Ambassador queried parliamentary leader Milan Urbani on the HZDS position on MD and Urbani unequivocally said HZDS Chairman Meciar would support the U.S. on the MD issue.)

CFE

14. (C) Kubis enthusiastically supports the U.S. approach on CFE, and offered to take an active role within the V4, V10

and the E.U. in promoting the "parallel actions" concept within the Alliance and with Russia. Kubis thinks the plan has promise, and is heartened that the Alliance has taken back the initiative. Kubis said he would like to discuss the Ukrainian proposal with A/S Fried during upcoming consultations, noting that it would be good, if possible, to have Ukrainian support on this issue.

Afghanistan

15. (C) FM Kubis confirmed that the GOS is considering a package of requests from the Dutch for enhanced participation in ISAF, including in a PRT. (Note: the Dutch Ambassador briefed Ambassador on the package, which proposes a total of over 100 Slovak soldiers in Afghanistan, PRT participation, a medical unit, an on-base OMLT, and engineering in Orguzan province integrated with the Dutch Units there.) Slovakia would not be able to satisfy the entire request due to inadequate resources. However, Kubis believes that the question of additional Slovak contributions, while relatively small-scale, has taken on a new urgency. Based on broad consultations in The Hague last week, Kubis is quite concerned that the Dutch may have a difficult time sustaining a long-term commitment in the face of parliamentary and public concerns. Other Allies may face similar domestic pressure, and the danger is that ISAF could begin to unravel.

Therefore, Kubis has requested an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Fico on September 19 to convey the "urgency" of the situation. Kubis noted that the GOS would need to take a decision on additional deployments before the end of the year in order to deploy in a timely way, and was nervous that hooking up with the Dutch could leave the Slovaks high and dry if the Dutch were to draw down. (Comment: Kubis' concerns about the ability of Allies to stay the course could cut two ways. He will make the case to PM Fico, he said, that the deployment of additional Slovaks has larger consequences for the ability of NATO nations to sustain the mission, and for the future of NATO itself. But, his pessimism could play into Fico's well-known reluctance to deploy Slovak troops abroad. If stalwarts like the Dutch may not be there for the long haul, why should the Slovaks? Furthermore, as we understand it, the Dutch need firm

commitments from other Allies to augment operations in the South. If the GOS decides to wait for the outcome of the Dutch parliamentary debate to make its decision (which would not be out of character), GON efforts to build domestic support will be further complicated. End comment.)

VALLEE